the following Centrally Sponsored Schemes during the Eighth Plan to promote marine fishing:-

(i) Development of coastal marine fisheries comprising the components viz. (a) Motorisation of Traditional Craft Introduction of Plywood Craft and (c) Introduction of intermediate type of craft for offshore pelagic fishing.

(ii) Reimbursement of Central Excise Duty on HSD oil supplied to mechanised fishing vessels below 20 metre length.

(iii) Enforcement of Marine Fishing Regulation Act and Introduction of Artificial Reefs and Sea Farming Project.

(iv) Scheme for development of Fishery Harbours (major and minor ports) and Fish Landing Centres.

(v) Development of model fishermen villages, group accident insurance and savings-cum-relief under the scheme on 'National Welfare if Fishermen'.

(c) and (d) Ninth Plan Schemes have not yet been finalised.

Open Market Quota of Sugar

2626. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged the Union Government to issue orders allowing the sugar factories to raise their open market sales in view of the bad fiscal position of the sugar industry in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b) In Februady, 1997 a request was received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh for release of additional free sale sugar to six cooperative sugar mills of the State identified by the High Level Restructuring Committee appointed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh to improve the financial position of these sugar mills. Besides, it was also requested that free sale sugar release may be increased in case of five units of Public Sector Company Nizam Sugars Ltd. so as to liquidate the cane price arrears to the cane growers as the Company was facing severe liquidity crunch.

(c) The Government have set up a Committee in the Ministry of Food, to consider such requests with specific guidelines and based on its recommendations, the release orders for additional quantities were issued to three units of cooperative sector and all the five units of Public sector in the month of February, 1997. Since the remaining three units of Cooperative sector had already been allowed additional quantities within a period of three months they did not qualify for further release in the month of February, 1997 in view of the above guidelines.

Wheat Stock in States

2627. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the failure of FCI to send the wheat from the Northern States to the wheat deficient areas is a major factor in its current scarcity;

(b) whether the nation has been forced to take recourse to the imports to combat the soaring prices of wheat whereas a little less than half of the nation's wheat stocks are lying in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh;

(c) whether 30% of the country's total wheat stocks are still held up in Punjab, where the same has to be stored in the open for the lack of storage space;

(d) whether the Government have conducted any inquiry on the failure of the Food Corporation of India to send wheat to the deficient States;

(e) if so; the outcome thereof; and

(f) the steps being taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) In the current year, wheat despatches exNorth during April' 96 to February' 97 have been 40% higher as compared to April, 95 to February, 96. The decision to import wheat was taken not on account of hold up of wheat stocks in Punjab, Haryana and U.P., but to augment the overall stocks, which had become inadequate due to less production and consequent lesser procurement in the Rabi season of 1996. Presently, approximately 23% of country's total present wheat/stocks are available in Punjab and their storage in open is not for lack of storage space but for transit movement and use of covered space for rice.

(d) to (f) Since there was no failure in sending wheat to the deficit States. these questions do not arise.

Indian Evidence Act, 1972

2628. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend the Indian Evidence Act, 1972;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to enact a new legislation regarding the custodial torture and provision of financial relief to the victims; and

(d) if so, the detials thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (d) Such a proposal is receiving the attention of the Government.

Privatisation of Sick Units

2629. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a proposal to privatise/revive/ modernise chronically sick PSUs in the drug sector;

(b) if so, the details regarding action plan finalised for the chronically sick units;

(c) the details of offers received for privatisation of these units and decision taken in this regard; and

(d) the present status of the proposal especially regarding the fate of IDPL units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA) : (a) and (b) There is no proposal to privatise any sick PSU at this stage. Four Central PSUs, namely, Indian Drugs & Pharmaceuticals Limited (IDPL), Bengal Immunity Limited (BIL), Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Limited (BCPL) and Smith Stanistreet Pharmaceuticals Limited (SSPL) have been formally declared sick by the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) in terms of the provisions of the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985. Three joint sector undertakings, namely, Uttar Pradesh Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited (UPDPL), Orissa Drugs & Chemicals Ltd. (ODCL) and Maharashtra Antibiotics & Pharmaceuticals Limited (MAPL) have also been formally declared sick by the BIFR.

Revival packages sanctioned by the BIFR are at different stages of implementation in BCPL, BIL, SSPL and ODCL. The revival package for UPDPL, sanctioned by the BIFR on 22/8/1995, was set-aside by the Appellate Authority for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (AAIFR) in October, 1996. In the case of IDPL, UPDPL and MAPL, decision with regard to the rehabilitation or otherwise is yet to be taken by the BIFR.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) In the case of IDPL, the report of the Operating Agency namely, Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), Bombay, appointed by the BIFR, has been received and a final decision about the future of IDPL is yet to be taken.

Reorganisation of MCD

2630. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether reorganisation of Delhi Municipal Corporation has been in progress;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether many services like fire service under the Delhi Municipal Corporation has been transferred to the Delhi Government and some other services are likely to be transferred; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b) The decentralisation of the functions of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) was approved in December, 1996. This decision was taken primarily with a view to taking civil administration to the door steps of the residents of Delhi by strengthening the zonal set up and by delegation of greater powers to the Zones. One of the salient features of reorganisation is that it is primarily based on the redeployment of existing resources.

(c) and (d) The functions relating to fire services were transferred from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi in November, 1994. More recently, the Delhi Vidyut Board was constituted in February, 1997 under the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi to replace Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking. The Delhi Municipal Corporation Act as amended in 1993 also provides for delinking the functions relating to water supply from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

[Translation]

Operation Sikh Forum

2631. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of an operation Sikh Forum (S.F.) launched by the Pakistani Intelligence Agency wherein the activists are being trained in carrying out various subversive activities in India; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) The Government is not aware of any 'Operation S.F.' (Sikh Forum) launched by Pakistani Intellicence Agency. Government is, however, aware that some hard core Sikh militants are being sheltered in Pakistan. Reports have also been received of some Sikh youths being trained in various camps organised by Pak ISI in Pakistan in the use of arms and explosives.

(b) Red Corner Notices have been issued through Interpol for the arrest of top hard core militants being sheltered in Pakistan. Vigilance and surveillance along border with Pakistan including the coastal areas has